



## Bath Heritage Watchdog

contact@bathheritagewatchdog.org

APPLICATION NUMBER: 17/00853/AR

ADDRESS: 1-3 James Street West

PROPOSAL: Display of non-illuminated new fascia panel advertisement, non-illuminated projecting sign and window vinyl's to 1-3 ground floor James Street West, Bath

CASE OFFICER: Anna Jotcham

DATE: 19 March 2017

COMMENT: **STRONG OBJECTION**

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Bath Heritage Watchdog strongly objects to this application.

The original building was the last remaining wartime 'make do and mend' repaired building in Bath, and although other bomb damaged buildings are preserved elsewhere in a derelict state it is believed that this was the last wartime repaired survivor in the whole of the country that was still fit for use in its wartime repaired state, and the Genesis Trust would have been happy to continue using it. The war-scarred building stood as a reminder of the tragic events in the Bath Blitz and as a memorial to those who lost their lives. It was treated locally as an unofficial war memorial.

Sadly, consent was granted for the demolition of the majority of the building leaving just the façade. As a consequence any proposals for the remaining façade have to be very carefully considered and thought out in order not to cause physical harm and public offence.

When determining all applications for new shopfronts and signage we ask that the following guidelines are observed.

*The context, or general setting, of Bath should be understood, respected and reflected in any proposed work to shopfronts.*

*Design, materials and workmanship should be of the highest quality.*

*Any proposed or altered shopfront should be historically credible.*

*House styles which do not meet the requirements of style, lettering, materials and signs are not acceptable. Multiples should be required to adapt their proposals to the special conditions of the city.*

*Standard designs of any sort are not acceptable. They should be specifically designed for their context.*

The remaining façade is a unique structure for which it will be difficult, if not impossible, to find any signage that will not cause harm. It is unfortunate that consideration for such signage was not given at the time of the original application. Certainly that submitted in this application is wholly inappropriate.

The first thing we would state is that there is an excessive amount of signage proposed - 7 signs for what is now a diminutive building is unacceptable.

We take each sign in turn:-

### SIGN 1

This sign is completely superfluous and is extremely harmful to the listed façade. It should be removed from proposals.

### SIGN 2

A sign in this position is considered tolerable as it is a prominent corner and its position is distanced from the historic stonework thus lessening the harm.

However the sign as proposed will straddle two fascia sections. We believe that any signage should be located in the recess. Aluminium is not considered an appropriate material since the facade remains a listed structure, and we would therefore suggest that in this case appropriate offset lettering in anodised metal is utilised.

The colours are strident and any signage should consist purely of the company name, removing the border and red stripe.

### SIGN 3

This sign is completely superfluous and is extremely harmful to the listed façade and the positioning of the Bath Blitz informative plaque. It should be removed from proposals.

#### SIGN 4

We strongly object to the addition of a projecting or hanging sign to the historic and fragile stonework. In addition a bus stop style sign is never acceptable on a listed building. It should be removed from proposals.

#### SIGN 5

Although we do not object to a sign in this position we do not favour the use of vinyls. We believe the possibility of a traditionally signwritten sign in this position should be explored. In addition we believe that the design and colours of the signage need to be improved reflecting the importance of the listed building.

We also note that the door that has been installed to the building below this sign is unauthorised. The planning permission and listed building consent both show the original timber door and this unauthorised substitution should be addressed as an Enforcement issue.

#### SIGNS 6 & 7

We do not believe that these signs are required and should be removed from proposals.

#### SUMMARY

The examples of shop signage provided are all on non-listed buildings. They cannot therefore be taken as a precedent and indeed they demonstrate how inappropriate the design and materials would be on a listed building. Unfortunately not all buildings can take “house-style” signage and we believe this building to be a case in point. The previous occupants found a single sign above the main entry doors to be perfectly adequate.

Applicants should be prepared to tailor their signage to reflect the very special circumstances in Bath and we would recommend that this application is withdrawn and the specialist advice of the Local Authority Conservation Officers sought prior to resubmission. In any case, a simple Advertising application is not sufficient and a Listed Building application must also be submitted.

The works, by virtue of the use of strident colours, inappropriate materials, introduction of a hanging sign and an excessive number of signs is considered to be detrimental to the special architectural and historic character and interest of the listed building, adjacent listed buildings and the conservation area contrary to S16 and S72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Section 12 ‘Conserving & Enhancing the Historic Environment of the NPPF and Local Plan Policies B1, B2 and CP6 of the BANES Core Strategy and saved policies BH2, BH6 and BH17 of the BANES local plan and should be refused in its current format.